

**In the Specification**

Please amend the specification as follows:

Paragraph 17

In a preferred embodiment, the first thawing/predrying zone where the product is thawed and predried is a removable unit. Then, when maintenance is required, the unit can be removed and replaced with minimal downtime of the system. If at least one further redundant second thawing/predrying zone unit is provided to be used in parallel with or as an alternative to the first thawing/predrying zone unit, no downtime is caused at all if one of the thawing/predrying zone units is removed for maintenance. Parallel thawing/predrying zone units can be used to increase the throughput of products, especially if the treatment chamber's capacity is large as compared to the capacity of the thawing/predrying zone unit, taking account of the respective treatment time.